

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1 and 4 as follows.

1. (Currently Amended) A surface treatment method for treating a surface of a metal material by heating said metal material, said surface treatment method comprising:

removing a passive film, wherein the removing comprises ~~by heating together~~
said metal material ~~in a place in which~~ and an amino resin ~~is present~~.

2. (Previously Presented) The surface treatment method according to claim 1, wherein said amino resin is applied to said surface of said metal material prior to heating said metal material.

3. (Original) The surface treatment method according to claim 2, wherein said amino resin is applied to said surface of said metal material by a solvent.

4. (Currently Amended) The surface treatment method according to claim 1, wherein said amino resin is not applied to said surface of said metal material and wherein said amino resin is placed in a heat treatment furnace together with said metal material to heat said metal material.

5. (Previously Presented) The surface treatment method according to claim 1, wherein melamine resin, urea resin, aniline resin, or formalin resin is used as said amino resin.

6. (Previously Presented) The surface treatment method according to claim 1, wherein said surface of said metal material is modified by forming a hardened layer or a compound layer on said surface of said metal material subsequently to heating said metal material.

7. (Previously Presented) The surface treatment method according to claim 1, wherein said surface of said metal material is modified by forming a hardened layer or a compound layer on said surface of said metal material while heating said metal material.

8. (Previously Presented) The surface treatment method according to claim 6, wherein nitriding or carburizing is performed.

9. (Previously Presented) The surface treatment method according to claim 7, wherein nitriding or carburizing is performed.